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Roy McPaters says he has heard his uncle J. Martin tell how they went out once and killed a sheep belonging to a near by farmer. That they were so hungry that they ate it when only half cooked and then fought over the skin. At another time they broke into a cellar where a woman had her ox hid. They cut its throat and took the meat back to camp.

Ambrose Bierce tells of hunting bear on Cheat Mountain when the snow was up to his arms. Whether he hunted for pleasure or to obtain food I do not know. Also I've been told by Lee Ervin, who had several uncles from Bath Co. in Camp Baldwin, that the reason they were so well prepared to repulse this Federal army was because they could see them as they marched down Back Allegheny and knew they were coming for an attack. Therefore, had all in readiness.

June 19, 1940

Nelle Y. McLaughlin

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Juanita S. Dilley
March 11, 1940

CHAPTER 4 - SECTION 4b-3

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

BATTLES OF MILL POINT AND
DROOP MOUNTAIN

In November 1863 there were no Confederate forces of any size anywhere in West Virginia except in the Greenbrier Valley. That was held by the Confederates from its head to its foot, some 170 miles, by between four and five thousand soldiers, protecting Virginia from attack from the west.

General Kelly, in command of the department of West Virginia, gave orders to General Averill at Beverly and General Duffie at Gauley Bridge to send armies to meet at Lewisburg and drive the Confederates out of the Greenbrier Valley.

Averill came into Pocahontas by the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike and turned south at Travelers Repose. At that time the Confederate troops were stationed as follows: At Glade Hill in the upper part of the county was Captain W. L. McNeel's Co., At Edray, Captain J. W. Marshall was in charge of a detachment watching the Marlins Bottom and Huttonsville Turnpike; Col. W. W. Arnett had a regiment at Marlins Bottom in comfortable log houses getting ready to winter there; Colonel W. L. Jackson had the main part of his regiment the 19th Virginia Cavalry at Mill Point; Col. W. P. Thompson was away with a part of his regiment on an expedition to Nicholas County and had gotten as far as Cold Knob in Greenbrier Co., Gen. Echols had the main part of the troops at Lewisburg.

McNeel's Co., at Glade Hill discovered the Advance of Averill and sent a messenger to warn Arnett at Marlins bottom of the advance. Averill moved swiftly, and but for this courier getting through would have surprised the Confederates in their camps. As it was the McNeel Soldiers got too close and four were captured, and John Adam McNeel had his horse shot and he got a broken leg out of it. The main camp of McNeel's Co. was cut off and they escaped by going up Galfords Creek and crossing the Allegheny Mountains to the waters of Back Creek.

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Marlinton, " Va.

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Arnett got his men out of Marlins Bottom by the skin of his teeth as it was. He sent a horse soldier (cavalryman) to tell Captain Marshall at Edray that he was going to barricade the road on Price Hill, and for him to march the back way and come to the road on top of Price Hill. Arnett cut a lot of trees across the Price Hill road and dug some of the road away on that sliding hillside. The exciting days for this county were Wednesday, Nov. 4, Thursday Nov. 5th; and Friday Nov. 6, 1863. Then it was that the biggest battle ever fought in Pocahontas occurred. Arnett left Marlins Bottom at sun down on Wednesday and Col. Ohley moved into his deserted log cabins at dusk.

There was only one road between Marlins Bottom and Mill Point, and Averill with his army at Huntersville had laid a plan to capture Arnett's forces by sending Ohley down the pike to get Arnett started south while Col. Harris moved his forces down Beaver Creek to get ahead of him and block the road at Marvin Chapel where the two roads unite. This plan would have succeeded but for Col. W. P. Thompson who had been recalled from Cold Knob with his cavalry and was unsaddling at his old camp on the John S. Kellison farm when Jackson's courier rode up and told him to hold the Beaver Creek road. Thompson immediately went to Beaver Creek, and spent the evening cutting trees across the road. He fell back firing as he went. This delayed the Federal Army to such an extent that Arnett got by.

On this expedition, Averill had with him some signal experts. It was arranged that the main corps would stay at Huntersville, while others went on to Marvin Chapel where they were to send up rockets to communicate the position and success of Col. Harris and his troops.

Merritt went to the top of the hill at Huntersville to observe the signals and Derricks went on with troops to report. It was arranged that the rockets were to be sent up at 8 P. M. and Merritt waited on top of the knob until 10 P. M. and seeing no rockets he went back to headquarters. It afterwards appeared that Derricks was not able to send up his rockets until 11 P. M. and they were not observed at Huntersville though the Confederates saw them red against the sky. They

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Marlinton, W. Va.

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were a sort of a new departure in mountain warfare. Thompson and his blockading tactics had interfered with the march so much that the army was three hours late.

Thursday Nov. 5, 1863, was Mill Point day. Mill Point has never been given the credit for the baptism by fire that she had that day because what occurred next day at Droop Mountain, five miles south, has overshadowed it to such a great extent.

There was enough powder burned that day at Mill Point to fight a great battle. The Federal armies were at Stephen Hale Run and on the hill between that run and Mill Point. The Confederates formed a battle line along the banks of Stamping Creek for a mile or more, and their artillery was on the hill just south of Mill Point. When their guns began to thunder it occurred to Jackson that his battle line was just the right distance from the Federal batteries to be in range of grape shot and he withdrew his army by having them slip silently up the stream until they were hid by the bend of the mountain, and he took them out by the flint pits near Tom Beards. Having gotten his troops under way, he looked up to the long smooth summit of Droop Mountain and decided to take his stand there. By nightfall he was in camp on the crest looking down on the Federal army as they kindled their fires in the broad fields of the Little Levels.

On that Thursday the Federal troops at Marlins Bottom got word to cut out the blockade and move on to Mill Point. Before they left, they burned the log cabins the Confederates had planned to winter in.

On that Thursday, too, General Echols at Lewisburg heard that Gen. Duffie with an army was covering him from Gauley Bridge, and Averill was coming from Beverly, so he got busy. He sent a regiment west on the Midland Trail to hold Duffie. He moved the remainder of his army to Pocahontas. That day he marched his men fourteen miles and went into camp at Spring Creek. The arrangements were to reinforce Jackson who was to fall back until Echols could join him. That night, message was received by Echols that the Federal army was much larger than they had thought at first, and that there would be a battle next day on top of Droop Mountain.

This was no night to sleep. Echols got his forces under way at two o'clock and reached Droop Mountain at nine o'clock that same morning. This was a record march.

26 miles over mountain roads. But when they came back that same night they made it in eleven hours. These mountain men marched 56 miles in 42 hours, and had wasted 7 hours fighting a battle. They never even hesitated when they reached Lewisburg for Duffie was due there that morning.

On Friday morning Nov. 6, 1863 Echols, Arnett and Marshall also Jackson and Thompson, Echols commanding, with an army of around 5000 soldiers were encamped at the foot of the mountain. He was in plain sight of the Confederates on the mountain and it was impossible to march up the mountain and attack from the front without being seen. Therefore, he sent Col. Augustus Moore, of the 28th Ohio Regiment, and Col. T. M. Harris, of the 10th West Virginia, to make a flanking movement and attack the Confederates from the rear. Averill made gestures of attack from the front while Moore and Harris with about 1000 soldiers went over the mountain and through the woods to attack in the rear.

Most of us have grown up with the idea that the Confederates neglected to guard their left flank and that they were taken by surprise, but a study of the official dispatches on both sides do not bear out that theory. It seems that no less than four detachments were sent against this attack and that they fought a long and bloody battle for about a mile through the thick forest and underbrush on top of the mountain. And what is more, instead of being surprised by the flanking movement, a Confederate soldier fired the first shot. This soldier said, "We were lying in the woods watching for the Federals to advance and the first we saw of them was when a soldier showed his head over a rail fence. This was the first soldier killed at the battle of Droop Mountain.

Moore says that "the Confederates raised at this fence and poured a devastating fire into his men. This was the critical moment, had his men broken at this surprise the battle would have been lost. The men were commanded to lie down, and in a few minutes Col. Harris's regiment joined him and they went forward fighting every inch of the way, arriving at last at the cleared hill where the rebel artillery was."

The battle hung in the balance as the fight went on in the west of the woods. The Confederate commander Echols knew of the importance of that movement. He sent Capt. Marshall's forces in there first. It was reinforced by Col. Thompson and some more companies of the same regiment. Then the 23rd Virginia Battalion was ordered into the woods on the extreme left to support Thompson. Then Col. Gibson with four companies of the 14th Virginia Cavalry (Cochran's regiment) were ordered into the woods where the fighting was heaviest. And finally a picked body of troops from three companies of the 22nd, including Capt. James McNeill's Nicholas Blues, were placed under Capt. John K. Thompson and they plunged into the fatal woods and by a desperate charge actually stopped the advance but the next wave went over them.

Averill marched up the mountain from the front when he detected the fighting in the rear. When his men reached the top of the mountain the Confederate forces broke and ran. The Federals fought a stern chase battle with them for hours.

Those who have made a study of troop movements which culminated in the Battle of Droop Mountain say that General Echols had no time to stay and fight it out with Averill when he knew another Union army was coming to cut off his rear by way of Lewisburg. He was in a trap and it was up to him to get his army out before it could be sprung.

It was a far more reaching victory than the Richmond government was willing to admit, for it was the last stand in a way that the Confederates made in West Virginia. The retreat took them well down to Dublin, and no rebel army was assembled here after that time. This was the turning point of the war so far as the mountains were concerned.

It was fought by troops from the two Virginias with one regiment each from Ohio and Pennsylvania. It broke the power of the Confederates and determined the control of the western part of Virginia.

Gen. Echols reported that the only trophy the Federals could boast of was the capture of a brass cannon. This cannon was a twelve pound howitzer or sling and was the pride of the Confederate army, but it had been injured in a battle at White

Sulphur Springs the summer before, and since it could not be used it was buried and a log rolled over the place to hide it. So far as is known this cannon was never found, though it is believed to be buried on the McCoy land.

Captain John Johnson lost an eye in this battle. It was his third wound. He was mentioned in the dispatches for his bravery and courage. He said that it was the hottest fire he ever experiences. Captain Marshall and Captain Hutton, also Lieut. John G. Beard of Pocahontas County received honorable mention in the dispatches.

As the Federal army returned over the Seneca Trail to Beverly they were fired upon by a troop of about 60 confederate soldiers near the top of Elk Mountain. Bushwhackers these soldiers were called. (Prices History of Pocahontas).

It was here that Colonel Cochran of Virginia made his famous escape. He was apparently in the power of a squad of Union soldiers. When asked why he did not surrender he said, "If they had said, "Col. surrender!" I would have done so; but they yelled, "Stop you -----red headed son of a gun!" and I would not accommodate anyone who would use such language to me.

Averell's full name was

William Woods Averill

I've found his name spelled Averil, and Averell, but I believe Averill is correct.

This material was taken from 1928 W. Va. Blue Book. History of Pocahontas,

Pocahontas Times Nov. 14, 1935.

June 19, 1940

BOONVILLE COUNTY

Inventory of Materials

Pottsville

Site: Westover V. Va.

Title: The Battle of Droop Mountain

Author: Rella F. Yeager

Status: Duplces

Date Submitted: _____ Length: 950 words

Contents: Duplces ~~statement~~ on

Editor: _____

The Battle of Droop Mountain.
Gives date & place, military units
of Federals & Confederates, description
of battle, result.

Source:

Consultant:

Reliability:

File: _____

Folder: _____

CIVIL WAR

THE BATTLE OF DROOP MOUNTAIN.

Allen F. Jones

The battle of Droop Mountain was fought on the 6th day of November, 1863. The confederate forces consisted of the 22nd Virginia Infantry, Colonel George Patton (of Kanawha County, afterward killed at Winchester), Commanding; the 19th Virginia Infantry, Colonel W. P. Thompson Commanding; the 20th Virginia Infantry, Colonel W. W. Arnott Commanding; the 14th Virginia Cavalry, Colonel James Cochran, Commanding; Jackson's and Chapman's Batteries, and Edgar's and Derrick's Battallions. The entire force was under command of General John Echols. This force, on the first day of the month, was lying at Meadow Bluff, in Greenbrier County.

The federal force was composed of the 14th Pennsylvania Cavalry, 23rd and 24th Ohio Infantry, the 5th, 6th, and 10th, West Virginia Infantry, and one battery of Artillery. This force had been stationed at Beverly in Randolph County. The federal force was under command of General W. W. Averell.

The movement of the two armies preceding this battle have been traced by competent authority to have been as follows: In the first week in November, 1863, General Averell ordered General Duffie to meet him at 2 p. m., November 7th, at Lewisburg, and Duffie marched from Kanawha, 120 miles. Averell marched from Beverly and had 110 miles to go. Averell reached Lewisburg on Saturday November 7th, at 2 p. m., and found that Duffie had got there at 10 a. m.

Averell left Beverly on Sunday and came over Cheat mountain by way of Cheat Bridge and marched by Camp Bartow, where they left the Staunton & Parkersburg Turnpike and took the road leading by Greenbank to Huntersville.

They reached Huntersville on Wednesday at noon, and there Averell ~~heard that~~ ~~Colonel W. P. Thompson, with the 19th Virginia Cavalry, was at~~ ~~Marlinton, at the Greenbrier Bridge.~~ Averell sent the 14th Pennsylvania Cavalry and the 3rd West Virginia Mounted Infantry down Beaver Creek ~~to ford the river eight miles below~~ south of Marlinton to cut off ~~Thompson at~~ Stephen Hole Run on the Marlin-Lewisburg Turnpike, and sent the 2nd and 8th West Virginia mounted infantry to Marlinton with Ewing's Battery. Thompson, apprehending his danger, left in a hurry and cut a barricade of trees across the pike on Price Hill, a mile or so distant from the bridge, and beat the federal forces to the pike at Stephen Hole Run and joined up with the confederate troops in the Levels and there turned and stopped the advance. There was some cannon firing that day across the valley of Stamping Creek at Mill Point. Averell, at Huntersville, got word in the night time from his command at Marlinton and from Stephen Hole Run, that Thompson had escaped the trap.

Averell moved his Huntersville army down Beaver Creek, Thursday, starting at 3 a. m. and reaching Mill Point at 8 a. m. He had ordered the Colonel in charge of the Marlinton army to cut out the barricade on Price Hill and join him at Mill Point, and both wings of the army arrived at Mill Point at the same time. The effect of this was to put the Confederates in motion and they retired from the plains around Hillsboro to the heights overlooking that town, and erected embankments and fortifications on the brow of the mountain overlooking the Levels where the pike tops the mountain going south.

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Averell says that the reason he did not attack on Thursday, when he came upon the Confederates in the Levels was that he was thirty four miles from Lewisburg and that if he drove his enemy forward that day they would get by Lewisburg before Euffix Duffie would have arrived from Kanawha.

On Thursday then about all that was done was to try to go around the Confederates and cut them off from the mountain, but Jackson beat them to it and left the Levels to be occupied by Averell.

Averell got his troops into position before daylight the next morning. He sent the 14th Pennsylvania to the left and they took up their stand near the Locust Creek bridge and appeared to be ready to charge up the mountain. Kesper's Battery was placed on the high ground above the

G. C. & GEORGIA A. BEARD.

Note dated April 6th, 1934, for \$10,000.00, due August 6th, 1934, and secured by a deed of trust dated October 16th, 1924, on all the real estate and personal property owned by the Marlinton Hotel Company. Said debt with interest is as follows:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Principal | \$10,000.00 |
| Interest from 8-6-1934 to 1-1-1935 | <u>241.64</u> |
| Total | \$10,241.64 |

Your Commissioner reports that the liens of the Bank of Marlinton and G. C. and Georgia A. Beard are of equal dignity, both being secured by the same deed of trust, the Rockbridge National Bank of Lexington, Virginia, having assigned its lien by virtue of said deed of trust to G. C. and Georgia A. Beard.

LIENS OF THE THIRD CLASS.

FARMERS & MERCHANTS BANK OF MARLINTON.

Note dated April 14th, 1934, for \$5,360.00, with a credit of \$60.00, due July 14th, 1934, and secured by a deed of trust dated October 15th, 1926, on all the real estate and personal property owned by the Marlinton Hotel Company. Said debt with interest is as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Principal | \$5,300.00 |
| Interest from 7-14-1934 to 1-1-1935 | <u>148.10</u> |
| Total | |

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|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Principal | \$5,300.00 |
| Interest from 7-14-1934 to 1-1-1935 | <u>148.10</u> |
| Total | \$5,448.10 |

LIENS OF THE FOURTH CLASS.

H. KELMENSEN.